



Judicial Council of California, Administrative Office of the Courts
Office of Communications, 455 Golden Gate Ave., San Francisco, CA 94102-3688
California Courts Infoline 800-900-5980, www.courts.ca.gov

NEWS RELEASE

Contact: [Lynn Holton](#), Public Information Officer, 415-865-7726

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 29, 2012

Judicial Council Committees Assist Courts Coping with Budget Cuts

Other Actions Taken at Public Meeting

San Francisco—A proposed new “business process reengineering” services model that would help trial courts improve productivity, increase efficiencies, and reduce costs was discussed yesterday at a public business meeting of the Judicial Council.

Council members Alan Carlson and Kim Turner presented the [proposed Trial Court Business Process Reengineering services model](#) (BPR), which was developed by the council’s Trial Court Presiding Judges Advisory Committee and the Court Executives Advisory Committee.

“BPR has been, and will continue to be, a key tool for courts to improve productivity and reduce costs,” stated Mr. Carlson, Court Executive Officer of the Superior Court of Orange County and current chair of the Court Executives Advisory Committee. “However, by itself, it cannot make up for severe budget reductions experienced by the trial courts in the last few years.”

“The strategies in the services model are designed to provide assistance to our trial courts in these difficult financial times,” said Ms. Turner, Court Executive Officer of the Superior Court of Marin County and 2011 chair of the Court Executives Advisory Committee. “Many courts have already done amazing work in this area, especially given the financial imperatives.”

Use of the services model is strictly voluntary, Ms. Turner noted.

Last year, Chief Justice Tani G. Cantil-Sakauye, chair of the council, suggested that the committees develop a framework for the services model as a way to assist state trial courts.

In other actions, the Judicial Council:

Status of California Court Case Management System (CCMS) and the Phoenix Program:

Approved an annual report to the Legislature entitled *Status of the California Court Case Management System and the Phoenix Program 2011*. Government Code section 68511.8(a) requires the Judicial Council to report annually to the Legislature on the status of CCMS and the Court Accounting and Reporting System (now called the Phoenix Financial System). The report also complies with Government Code section 68511.8(b) by including independent project oversight reports and independent validation and verification reports issued for CCMS in 2011.

Ethics Standards for Neutral Arbitrators: Referred to the council's Rules and Projects Committee proposed amendments to ethics standards that apply to all persons serving as neutral arbitrators under arbitration agreements. The council deferred its decision asking the committee to determine the appropriate process for reviewing the recommendations.

Funds Supporting the Judicial Branch: Heard a presentation by the AOC Finance Division on the funds that support judicial branch operations. The discussion included current and projected balances of these funds and how they have been used to mitigate the impact of budget reductions in recent years. No council action was required.

Consent Agenda: Approved 14 proposals on the consent agenda concerning changes to rules and forms required by recently enacted legislation and otherwise recommended by council advisory committees. One report proposes additions and revisions to the Judicial Council's Criminal Jury Instructions. The council also approved other items on the consent agenda, including several annual reports required by state law on local courthouse construction funds, electronic recording equipment, court reporter fees and equipment, special fund expenditures, and California's Access to Visitation Grant Program. The council also accepted the final audit report of the Superior Court of Riverside County, the last step before the report is made public.

INFORMATIONAL REPORTS

Courtroom Closures: Since 2010, 24 courts have notified the public and the council of plans to close courtrooms or cut clerks' office hours on days that are not judicial holidays, according to an informational report. The notice to the public and council are required by Government Code section 68106. Since the last council report in January 2012, two courts—San Mateo and Merced—have given such notice, which is posted on the California Courts website.

Firearms relinquishment in Domestic Violence Cases: The Domestic Violence Practice and Procedure Task Force reported on the impact of implementing rule 4.700 of the California Rules of Court regarding firearms relinquishment in criminal domestic violence cases. This report was requested by the council in 2010. No council action was required.

The public meeting was audiocast live. The agenda and reports are posted on the California Courts website at <http://www.courts.ca.gov/16977.htm>.

#

The Judicial Council is the policymaking body of the California courts, the largest court system in the nation. Under the leadership of the Chief Justice and in accordance with the California Constitution, the council is responsible for ensuring the consistent, independent, impartial, and accessible administration of justice. The Administrative Office of the Courts carries out the official actions of the council and promotes leadership and excellence in court administration.